



IN MEMORIAM
Ralph Gordon Hall
FLIGHT LIEUTENANT
IN THE
ROYAL FLYING CORPS

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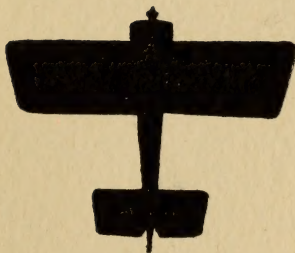


MONTREAL
1918

*“ Their’s not to reason why,
Their’s but to do and die.”*

Tennyson.

THE SOPWITH SCOUT



TYPE OF THE AEROPLANE FLOWN
BY LIEUTENANT HALL



THIS BRIEF MEMORIAL
of
RALPH GORDON HALL
is dedicated to the memory
of
HIS MOTHER

in the circle of whose intense Christian personality he was reared, whose influence and training left their lasting impress upon his character, and whose memory he ever affectionately cherished.

BIOGRAPHICAL



RALPH GORDON HALL, son of Thomas Hall and Beatrice Helen Ballantyne, was born on the 6th of March, 1898, at Jarrow-on-Tyne, England. In 1904, Mr. Hall located in business in Montreal, and in 1906 took up his family residence in Montreal West. Mrs. Hall was a woman of lofty Christian ideals, singularly devoted to the religious training and the highest welfare of her children, and though she died in April, 1912, when these were still young, the memory of her sainted life remained with her family as a priceless inheritance.

Ralph attended Aberdeen School in his home town, and then Lower Canada College. On leaving school he became associated in business with his father, who had established the reputation of ranking among the foremost marine engineers of the continent, and who has built up and promoted in Montreal, large engineering and dockyard works, where splendid opportunities awaited his son.

But the bugle-call to the Great War rang in the young man's ears. He first attempted to enlist in the Patrol Boat Service of the British Navy, but found that the higher age requirements for this branch of service stood in his way. His thoughts then turned to aviation, and on June 11th, 1917, he was recommended by the Montreal Branch of the Aerial League to the authorities of the Royal Flying Corps, Toronto, where he shortly enlisted and entered upon his course of training. He made rapid progress in the art of flying and was very fortunate in the Canadian camps. About Nov. 1st last year, he was sent to England to continue his course, which however, after a few weeks, suddenly came to a tragic close. He was accidentally killed in collision, during practice manœuvres, on Jan. 23rd, 1918, at Castle Bromwich Aviation Camp, Birmingham, England.

Lieut. Gerald A. Birks, his room mate at Bromwich, writes of the accident as follows:—
“Ralph was up in a Sopwith 'pup, just putting in a little time before going on a 'S.E. 5'. A formation of 'Camels', flying a little higher, suddenly dived and one of the machines dived directly onto Ralph. Both machines were

completely wrecked. In his death we lost a splendid pilot and a stout true heart."

His remains were brought to Montreal and buried in Mount Royal Cemetery on Feb. 16th, 1918, with military honors.

A memorial service was held in Erskine Presbyterian Church, at which Rev. R. W. Dickie, D.D., Moderator of the Presbytery of Montreal, presided, being assisted by Rev. Dr. Hanson and Rev. A. S. Ross, the latter of whom, his pastor, delivered the tribute that appears in the pages immediately following.

The Memorial Verses also found within, were composed by Rev. A. D. Martin of Ville St. Pierre, Que., who writes with the intimate acquaintance of one who for some time had been Ralph's tutor.

This booklet is published in memory of one of the noblest of our Canadian lads, so many of whom, like him, have made the supreme sacrifice on the altar of our Empire and for the cause of Humanity, and who all, with their spirit of heroism and devotion to duty, have added deathless fame to the annals of our nation.

A. S. ROSS.

September, 1918.

FUNERAL TRIBUTE



Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.—Rev. xiv, 13.

THE sharp sickle hath been thrust in on the earth these days, and legions of the noblest and best clusters of the vine have been gathered. As sorrow and mourning come to our hearts we turn for consolation to the Almighty One and to His Word. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein

ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

These inevitable casualty lists, bringing messages of anguish to so many homes in our land, constitute also a compelling challenge to our Christian faith. Is our belief in immortality a substantial thing equal to our present need? How do we think of these young lives cut off in their early prime? Have all the capacities and functions of personality been arrested for all time by a stray bit of shrapnel?

How we cherish to-day those impressive words of the great Master, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." These are not dead. The Christian view of life was given for such days as these.

And we must also now refashion our standards of success. Who is he that lives the best life to-day ? Is it he who progresses through the seven ages of man and knows prosperity, popularity, and social, financial, political power ? These things now seem to be but the accidents that cling as tinsel to the life, and that are stripped away when the man, the soul must stand forth in his inherent, his real character, before his Maker.

How commonplace and monotonous may such quality of spirit be, in comparison with that displayed by those who go forth, voluntarily, on the highway of duty and death ! Who are living at the zenith of life to-day, but they who, in the spirit of self-renunciation, have given their all for our great cause, so many of whom have made the supreme sacrifice that the world may be safe for us, and that honor and justice and human liberty perish not from the earth.

And though these have fallen as "the flowers of the forest" in a "long long roll," we would treat the gift of each of these as a holy thing. What has been given in the way of this sacrifice shall never be common, and we cannot permit any of these our dear dead ones to pass

out from the midst of our human affairs, without the garland of a tribute to his name.

“ He that believeth in me shall never die.” A few years more or less here what boots it ? As they served Him here, they shall still serve Him day and night, in ceaseless, tireless, harmonious service in His temple. One less to represent us in the great fight; but then the spirit of heroes breeds heroes, who catch up the torch that other hands have flung to us as they passed on.

Ralph Gordon Hall was born in England less than 20 years ago, but from early boyhood his life was spent in Montreal. His Sunday School life was begun in this church (Erskine Presbyterian), but for the past twelve years his home was in Montreal West. He was nurtured in a home where Christian ideals not only created a pure atmosphere, but also set a programme of Christian training, and the impress of a sainted mother's teachings was early received upon his life. In his 14th year he attended my Communicants' Class, and made public profession of his faith in Christ, and has always been a most helpful, consistent, and devoted member of his church. In the Sunday School and Church choirs, as a teacher in the Sunday School,

as a member of the Congregational Missionary Committee, he displayed at an exceptionally early age a warm devotion to the courts of the Lord's House, and a most commendable readiness to assist in every line of service for the Master's Kingdom, as the door to such opened before him. In his church relations he had already evinced a fine loyalty to the motto which the Mission Band, of which he had been a member, had adopted during his mother's Presidency, namely "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." And now as we look back, it almost seems that his gallant young spirit had premonitions that his day of opportunity would be a brief one, and he must be "redeeming the time."

To him, as to thousands of the noblest youth of our land, came the call of King and duty, and he was restive to do his bit, in this greatest adventure of all human history. In June last he enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps, and was most fortunate and successful in the Canadian aviation camps. About Nov. 1st, he left for overseas. He had been in England prosecuting his training but about two months when he was killed in collision in the air, during practice

manoeuvres. We have his mortal remains with us, but the soul, the man, has passed on up the shining way.

He was a young man of fine and rugged physique, of manhood and character well matured for his years; a merry hearted yet serious minded lad, one of that very high type that Canadian homes have given with such splendid loyalty for the Empire and Humanity. We treasure highly every detail of those last moments, when to him the call came so suddenly. A friend writing from England of the incident quotes the Adjutant of the training squadron at Castle Bromwich, who in making his report says: "Lieut. Hall was an excellent pilot and his death is deeply regretted by everyone here."

We thank God for his young life. He was with us but a few years only, during which, however, he lived most worthily. In his death he brought honor to his name, and distinction to his family, inasmuch as he gave his all for our great cause. "He has followed the Christ in the way of sacrifice and shares in His reward."

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

IN MEMORIAM

R. G. H.



Oh happy heart, all unafraid to meet
The foe entrenched or striking from the clouds,
Doing thy duty, suddenly didst greet
The angel Death who with his wings enshrouds.

Oh fair, brave life, with brightest hopes asway,
Faithful and true, wholehearted for the good;
Complete, ere dawn had broadened into day,
In all life's powers to duty's call subdued.

Gone! Yet thy name is graven on our hearts,
And all the sacred memories, hopes and fears
Are ours to cherish, and the thought imparts
A sense of nearness still despite our tears.

Faith writes *Resurgat* underneath thy name,
And Love o'er Death still triumphs through
the might

Of Him who, dying for us, overcame.—

We see but darkness. Thou art in the light.

A. D. M.



